

Washington State



Department of Agriculture

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER LAST EDITION 2009

If you have questions or comments about this letter or its contents feel free to contact Dr. Paul Kohrs at 360-902-1835 or the permit desk at 360-902-1878. Your input is greatly appreciated. If you have an appropriate item to include in a future newsletter, email Dr. Paul Kohrs at pkohrs@agr.wa.gov.

NEWS FROM OTHER STATES

Since the last edition, two states that have had issues with Piroplasmosis, which is considered a Foreign Animal Disease in this country. In mid June a total of eight horses were discovered infected with Piroplasmosis in Missouri. They were determined to be participants in unsanctioned horse races and other illegal activities. Five horses were euthanized immediately, but before authorities could return and properly euthanize and dispose of the other horses they were stolen from behind locked gates. Two horses were at the index location and a third horse was stolen from a trace location. It is thought that the horses have been illegally moved to Mexico, but this is not for certain. This incident appears to be iatrogenic (owner carelessness) when these horses are given a large number of blood transfusions to enhance their performance.

The other incident is occurring in Texas right now, where a large ranch in Kleberg County discovered a positive Piroplasmosis horse. Subsequent testing revealed 31 more positive horses at that location and additional testing on 96 horses brought the total to 101. WSDA now requires a permit on all Texas horses and put restrictions on horses originating from this county in Texas with requirements for negative testing on a C-Elisa and a follow-up test later; any positive test animal is not allowed to remain in the state. Check with the USDA for statements that Canada is now requiring on horses destined for importation.

The Piroplasmosis horses that have been in our state for nearly five years are still under quarantine. One horse succumbed to colic this summer, so there are only three left with one of those dealing with other significant health issues. We continue to maintain this quarantine despite considerable legal pressure from the owner.

Tuberculosis continues to make the national animal health news. Nebraska is in the midst of testing 14,000+ animals after a positive herd was discovered on a slaughter trace. As of this writing, the herd is under quarantine and could be depopulated. This has a connection with an infected cervid herd in the same general area, but all of the contact testing has been negative to this point.

Indiana has had three cervid herds test positive and New York has had one. Since we have no cervid farming in this state it is one less issue WSDA has to deal with.

Texas has also had another TB dairy herd discovered in April. This 3000 cow dairy showed 30 more infected animals when tested. This is cause for serious efforts on our part to locate a trace animal that supposedly arrived in Washington as a small calf in mid 2006.

New Mexico is in the countdown and expects to have free status back in 2010.

California has tested nearly a million animals at a cost of eight million dollars and found eight positives. It is unlikely that California will depopulate more herds at this point, as the infection rate in these herds continues to be very low. There is no evidence that it has jumped into the beef industry in California.

Minnesota has split state status (Washington does not recognize the split state status) and has taken great strides to monitor the infection rate in wildlife. It has put in place a significant buyout of beef herds in the management zone that have agreed to stay out of the business (for a fee) until the state regains its free status.

Michigan is unchanged with a significant wildlife reservoir and long range efforts to isolate cattle from deer. They struggle with politics as the hunting industry in Michigan's main area brings in more revenue than the cattle business.

The USDA is proposing major changes in the way TB is managed in the country because they can no longer afford to depopulate these large herds for 1-5 infected animals. They presented their concept papers recently at the USHA meeting. Everyone agrees that some changes are in order, but the "devil is in the details" about interstate movement requirements, when a herd is depopulated and when it isn't. If you would like to learn more about the

proposals and comment on them, you can get the information by going to the following website:

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2009-0073>

Brucellosis is also slated for an overhaul and has a similar concept paper ready for comments. The following link will give you information on the concept paper:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2009/10/printable/brucellosis_concept_paper.pdf

Vesicular Stomatitis made a brief appearance this summer with two premises in Texas and two in New Mexico. It did not spread from there, so the quarantines were quickly lifted and the outbreak was over by mid Summer. This is a unique disease in its incidence and prevalence and we wonder whether or not it will continue over the Winter in the US. It will be interesting to see if we have a greater spread next summer.

Of course no discussion of Animal Health is complete without "swine flu". This disease continues to be of concern for the human aspects of the infection. WSDA has had early questions and conferences about the disease and it appears that the majority of pigs that get sick are those that get it from humans. For the health of animals it appears to be good practice to stay away from swine if you have been experiencing flu-like symptoms so you are not the cause of an outbreak in swine herds. Public health officials believe at this point this is the primary virus causing illness, so take some precautions if you have been ill. The pork industry has lost billions because of the nomenclature of this outbreak, so as veterinarians, it would be wise to refer to it as novel H1N1 flu instead of swine flu. WSDA has a link on its website if you would like more information.

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The CEM outbreak that began last December in the US seems to be winding down. Washington has completed the testing on twelve mares and two stallions. The owners of two of the mares have elected to place them under supervised permanent quarantine. As further proof of our freedom from the disease, the USDA is proposing to test another 2000 horses from an as yet undetermined surveillance stream. The true index case has never been positively determined but a Danish Stallion imported in 2004 is a strong possibility.

Washington has had one trace animal from the Texas herd as mentioned previously. This animal entered as a seven month old calf in mid 2006. She lost all Texas ID, but has a unique brand on the RR rib that has been our only link. The Texas herd seems to have a particularly virulent, easily transmitted strain, and we (WSDA and USDA) are very anxious to find this animal. Records have been sorely lacking, but if you see an animal with an unusual brand on the right rib in a large dairy in Eastern Washington (that is about as far as we have been able to narrow it down to) please call as soon as you can.

In another unrelated incident, concerned cattlemen made a complaint about CAN branded cattle backrounding on range land in the Okanogan National Forest. It turns out a shipment of 405 head crossed the border destined for a restricted feedlot, but were diverted to the range land instead. These animals were not tested and though there may have been limited contact with native breeding cattle, this was still a serious matter. WSDA coordinated the roundup, transport and testing of 378 of the animals so far and all have been negative. There has been some death loss and the weather will likely drive down the remaining animals very soon. This is a great example of coordination and response from industry and Animal Services to address a serious problem that could have had dire consequences. Anytime you have concerns about imported livestock please call us and let us know and we will follow up.

Many of you have already taken the TB certification course and we are grateful to everyone who is striving to better their testing skills. If you are not techno savvy, please call the office and make arrangements for one of the field VMO's to visit you with the CD that's available to go through the information and tests with you so you can satisfy the new requirements. These must be completed by April 30, 2010. If you would like to do Trichomoniasis testing for your clients, similar CE is available to satisfy that requirement as well. VMO's have those CD's also if you prefer that method.

As of this writing there have been no reported MCF cases related to any of our summer fair events. WSDA and the Fair Association have gone through significant lengths to prevent a tragic repeat of the events at the Puyallup Fair in 2008. Many local fairs went to great lengths to mitigate the risk and to educate the public and the exhibitors about not only MCF but other diseases as well. Many people who had only a vague idea of what biosecurity means now have a much better understanding of the risk associated with animal to animal and animal to human interaction and the inherent risks associated with congregating animals. It was ironic that H1N1 also emerged during the same time as the fair events and it gave fair officials and WSDA another opportunity to highlight the interaction of animals and humans and the potential for zoonoses and reverse zoonoses to occur.

WEST NILE NEWS

West Nile Virus was very active this year again. All the mammalian (horses and one dog) cases that tested positive were in Eastern Washington. Equine cases were reported in Adams, Benton, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, and



Yakima counties. There were only scattered occasional positive birds in Western Washington. We had a total of 70 clinical cases in horses of West Nile reported to us and 35 of those died or may have died. As of early October, there were 164 cases reported in the country and Washington had 64 of those, so you can see we definitely have a firmly established virus in our state. We had one dog reported to us that showed some clinical signs but was also dealing with degenerative disc disease that would have given similar signs. The only horse that had a current WNV vaccination that was clinical at all was so mild that the attending vet described it as "if the owner hadn't noticed the signs, the animal would have never been tested". Veterinarians working with this disease felt that due to the economy this year the reported cases were very low compared to the actual incidence; owners were not spending the money for testing or treatment. The bottom line message is that vaccination is effective, much less expensive and more rewarding than treatment. If you have clients in the above listed counties it would be prudent to have the discussion with horse owners about the risks and benefits of vaccination in late Spring or very early Summer.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

As was mentioned in the first edition, Dr. Lyndon Badcoe joined our division on May 1st. He has been to several Avian Health meetings and has taken the TB training so he will be able to help out in several different capacities within the division. He possesses great computer and technical skills and has been a valuable addition to the staff. His wife, Dr. Rocio Crespo has taken over the management of the Avian Health and Food Safety Laboratory in Puyallup as Dr. Singh Dhillon retired from the lab on July 1st. We are very fortunate to have professionals of this caliber and can utilize their expertise in many different areas.

Sonya DeLisle has left the Animal Services permit desk for a teaching position with Tacoma Community College. We will miss her quick wit and her skills. We were fortunate to move Stacia Speck from the Livestock Brand Inspection program to the permit desk. We look forward to Stacia working in this capacity in the Division and expect that she will be handling these duties very well.

NEWS FROM COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

AVIAN HEALTH – Julie Broome

WSDA and the Washington State University (WSU) Veterinary Medical Extension received a \$5,000 grant from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation to provide continuing education for veterinarians interested in working with poultry. WSDA and WSU conducted two training sessions, one in Puyallup and one in Pullman, and 30 veterinarians attended both sessions. Based on feedback from participants and interested veterinarians, in the future we hope to offer another introductory course as well as an advanced course as funding allows. If you are interested in attending a course in the future please contact Julie Broome and she will ensure that you will be provided with information on upcoming courses.

Wild water fowl testing by the USDA and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has been continuing this Fall. We have seen a significant increase in the percent testing positive to H5 or H7. Because of this, clients with poultry need to be reminded that their birds should not commingle with wild waterfowl.

In 2009, the Avian Health Program made some changes to our National Poultry Improvement Plans (NPIP). In the past, Pullorum-Typhoid (PT) testing was a free service for NPIP participants. If you think you might be interested in participating in the poultry courses or the NPIP Program, please contact Julie Broome by calling the Avian Health Hotline at 1-800-606-3056 or email her at jbroom@agr.wa.gov

FAD – Dr. Paul Kohrs

The FAD cooperative agreement has been used primarily in the testing of CEM animals. The owners of the horses paid their private veterinarian, but WSDA was the third party verifier of the testing protocols and sample submission. As mentioned earlier, it appears that the CEM outbreak is winding down with no new horses in Washington since June. Funding from the FAD has also been used to defend the quarantine for the Piroplasmosis horses. FAD investigations were three in number and focused around the possibility of Vesicular Stomatitis in equines. All were negative. We also used some of the funding to offset travel expenses in education and outreach during the MCF aftermath. We continued to emphasize the need for public awareness for all FAD's and the similarity of FAD's with endemic diseases such as MCF.

JOHNES – Dr. Paul Kohrs

The Johnes program as mentioned in the last edition has collapsed due to lack of funding. It's unfortunate, but unless industry sees the value in the program and is willing to fund some of the activities, it will be primarily an educational effort aimed at veterinarians and producers. Since Dr. Kinsel left, there has been no Designated Johnes Coordinator for the state. At the present time, Dr. Paul Kohrs is the acting DJC and will field inquiries and comments



that you may have. If you would like to be on the monthly newsletter list let Dr. Kohrs know and he will see that you get a copy. We would very much prefer an e-mail address, but will accept a snail mail one as well.

SCRAPIE – Dr. Ben Smith

The Scrapie program is in similar condition in Washington State. Funding got so low and the work plan so onerous that it was decided it was no longer worth the administrative time to make the effort. Again, if industry sees the value in a program like this then the funding should be generated to support it. Dr. Ben Smith will still answer your questions in this area and his number is 509-350-0081.

RESERVE VETERINARY CORPS – Dr. Cynthia Faux

This has been a busy Summer and Fall for the RVC program. The first annual RVC meeting was held in July immediately prior to the national AVMA meeting in Seattle. Forty RVC members attended the day long meeting. The program included talks on *Zoonotic Diseases of Concern to Animal Disaster Responders*, *How the RVC Might Be Involved in a Response*, and *Disaster Stress Management*. Members had their pictures taken for their badges, received their annual fit testing for N-95 respirator use and trained on the powered air purifying respirator. Twelve RVC members attended the *Pet Poultry for Veterinary Practitioners* course, co-hosted by the RVC, the WSDA Avian Health Program, and WSU-Veterinary Extension. In addition, a number of RVC members have attended the *Agricultural Emergency Response Training* (AgERT) offered by the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama.

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